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TAGS: PGOV KPKO MOPS CG
SUBJECT: FARDC BEGINS REINFORCING TROOPS IN ITURI

REF: KINSHASA 359

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) The Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) have begun transferring elements of the 2nd Integrated Brigade in Beni to Bunia to assist existing FARDC troops in their fight against militia forces. According to MONUC-Bunia Head of Office Sharouh Sharif, more than 700 new FARDC troops have arrived in Bunia. By the end of the transfer, Sharif said some 3,000 additional FARDC forces will be in place in Ituri. FARDC Chief of Staff Gen. Sylvain Mbuki requested the reinforcements after the mutiny March 1 by FARDC commandos during anti-militia operations near Aveba (reftel). Sharif said MONUC and the FARDC have not yet set a date for the resumption of military operations.

¶2. (C) Militias in Ituri are continuing their attacks on MONUC and FARDC troops. Bangladeshi and Pakistani peacekeepers exchanged fire with militias March 13 in the Khajana area. MONUC reports two militia members were killed in the fighting. Meanwhile, MONUC and the FARDC began cordon-and-search operations in Bunia March 14, with MONUC police and Ituri Brigade forces visiting suspect houses to search for militias and weapons.

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